

**1 Timothy 3: 2; "Blameless - the Examples from Scripture", Sermon # 3
in a series on the Eldership", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
February 21st, 2010, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Last Sunday I introduced the subject of the elder's qualifications by attempting to define the overall qualification – Blameless. The elder must be blameless in the sense that he cannot be charged with any sin or impropriety. But I labored to explain that the word blameless has a significant positive reference as well. He should be a man of justice. He should have a well-defined sense of what is biblically right. He must be prudent; being wise in relation to his having spiritual discernment. And he must have fortitude of spirit to persevere in his work. He must be self-controlled or temperate. All this I set before you as showing to you that a blameless man is a virtuous man. He has his mind, his heart, and his will inclined to do God's will and what is good, and right, and true. In our coming to understand the 16 qualifications listed here for an elder it will be, I believe, extremely helpful to have Biblical examples of these qualities set before us. And so it is my purpose to take these qualities and attempt to put faces to them. I would like these character qualities to come to life for you so you will see hands, feet, and especially hearts in action in relation to real people whom the Scripture commends to us as having these qualities. I do this so that you will understand what the Lord is looking for in an elder; but not an elder only, but also from all Christians where it will apply. In this first section of 7 qualification we find the one over-all qualification – Blameless; followed by 4 personal qualifications, and that followed by 2 ministerial qualifications.

Let's look again this afternoon, first, at the one over-all qualification – Blameless; and put some faces to it.

Although we are given only a few personal references to blamelessness which are directly mentioned in the Bible; these that I mention this afternoon will suffice. Luke 1: 5 and 6 is one of them; if you will turn over there with me. "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah." "His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth." "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." "But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years." This is a very informative text as it shows us that not having children is no bar to service and ministry. This couple had none, as of yet, and yet Zacharias was ministering as a priest. They were not to be blamed for their inability to have children. Having children is not a mandatory requisite for Eldership in the New Testament either; as the Apostle Paul was neither married, nor had children. Zacharias and his wife were both elderly; and that too, was no bar to either Zacharias' formal service, or

their both "walking in all the commandments of the Lord." Is there really such a thing as retirement from following after the Lord, in this life? I say not. You may retire from you're your formal service, or the job or task that you are called to; and yet there is no dismissal from serving Christ until we die. Indeed, we shall serve Him forever. But the thing that stands out here, in relation to this man and his wife, was that they were blameless. They were both righteous in the sight of God it says, "walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord." Their ultimate concern in living their lives, was not only to be righteous before men, but before their God who saw their heart. They were concerned with walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. Their ultimate concern in life was to keep the commandments of God in such a way that they did their part to uphold God's worship and to think about what God would have them to do in every given situation of life. This is what holiness is by the way. This is what every Christian should be striving to do. Not all can become an Elder, but each believer can become, by the grace of Christ, more holy and striving to live blamelessly. Jude, verse 24 says, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy...." It is only by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are found walking in the Lord's commandments, blamelessly. Remember, that to be blameless is not to be sinless; but it is being willing to be taught, willing to be led, holding fast to all the truth that God has imparted to you; both in terms of Biblical teaching and the experience of learning to do what is right in the various situations of your life; this is what it means to be blameless. Zacharias was considered "blameless" by the Lord and others who looking at his life before he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense that day when he met an angel of the Lord who gave him the good tidings of the conception of his son; John the Baptist. Zacharias did not believe the angel's message to him and questioned how this thing could come about since he was so old. His unbelief was a sin, and he fell under a disciplinary judgment of the Lord; he would be mute and would not be able to speak until John was born. But, because of his faith in God, he was not condemned for this sin of unbelief; and he was still called blameless in the Scriptures. A blameless person will work through all the issues of their unbelief in relation to the Lord's great working in their life. They will be "blamed" for their unbelief by God, but because of the grace of Christ, it will not be held against them, and they will be taught to believe, even as Zacharias was when he said, "His name shall be John." He received the chastening of the Lord and all was well with him. His reputation with God and men was good. As people around him looked upon his life, he could indeed be called blameless. But it is all because of the grace of Christ. Ask yourself this afternoon if you are like Zacharias and Elizabeth, walking in all the commandments of the Lord, blamelessly?

The 2nd Reference is found in Job, Chapter 1, verse 1, if you will turn with me there. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil." The KJV

says that, "that man was perfect and upright." Now, once again, this word "perfect" does not refer to sinlessness or to complete sanctification, for this will only come to a believer at death. The word in the Hebrew is— "**tam, *tawm*; which means complete; and usually refers to one who is (morally) pious; specifically, gentle, dear: — coupled together, perfect, plain, undefiled, upright.**" I believe that the word does refer to how God sees him as a believer; complete in Christ; but it is more. It means that he was a man of integrity in his heart before God, and in his dealings with men. Turn over to Job Chapter 31 with me. We find here some of the major components of a blameless man's thought and action. Let me give you the overview. 1st – He was blameless with regard to unchaste thoughts and roving eyes. (Verses 1-4) "I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?" "For what is the allotment of God from above, and the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? Is it not destruction for the wicked, and disaster for the workers of iniquity? Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps?" Job knew that God saw him in all of his ways; even when in private; even when in secret. God was with Job every step of his way, and He could see Job in secret praying that he would be morally pure in the way that he used his eyes in relation to the opposite sex. God knew that he feared Him with a holy fear, and that he had made a covenant with his eyes before God; he had made a vow and a promise; that he would not look intently and gaze upon a young woman to think about her sexually, and thus sin against God and against his wife, and against her. What a rebuke to this sex-saturated society! When will we learn what true holiness begins with, and consists of? Let the Lord give you strength in this, O young man and old man, that you not sin against Him. The Lord Jesus alone can make you blameless in this area of your life, so that you will not be a secret hypocrite; so that you will not come into disaster in your life, both now, and for all eternity. God has given marriage that a man and a woman might be satisfied, truly satisfied, and blameless in this life.

2ndly- Job was blameless with regard to falsehood and dishonesty and covetousness." (Verses 5-8) "If I have walked with falsehood, or if my foot has hastened to deceit, let me be weighed on honest scales, that God may know my integrity." "If my step has turned from the way, or my heart walked after my eyes, or if any spot adheres to my hands, then let me sow, and another eat; yes, let my harvest be rooted out." God is a God of truth, and He desires truth in the inmost being. A great part of integrity is being able to walk in God's truth and not be deceitful; not to be tricky in order to get things from other people. God sees all deceitful cleverness and trickery to be sinful, and can only reward it with the same being dealt back to the one who practices it. Psalm 18, verse 25 – "With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd." "For you will save the humble people, but will bring down haughty looks." Ah, the wisdom of God is wiser than men, and the foolishness of God is more clever than men! Let us all be straightforward in our

dealings with each other. 3rd – Job was blameless in regard to being faithful to his wife. Verses 9-12 say – "If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, then let my wife grind for another and let others bow down over her." "For that would be wickedness; yes it would iniquity deserving of judgment." "For that would be a fire that consumes to destruction, and root out all my increase." I will say nothing more than I have said already concerning immorality, except to say that the consequences are very grave for a man's body and his estate. I believe that to counteract all of this and to prevent it, a man needs to be "hopelessly in love with his wife", as a godly man that I know once said.

Fourthly – Job was blameless with regard to the claims of justice which were brought before him. Verses 13-15 say, "If I have despised the cause of my male or female servant when they complained against me, what then shall I do when God rises up?" "When He punishes, how shall I answer Him?" "Did not He who made me in the womb make them?" "Did not the same One fashion us in the womb?" You see; Job did not think himself better than other people; even the lowest of people in their station in life. If they had a complaint, he sincerely heard it and thought about what he could do to help and change the situation. This is a part of true godliness. Fifthly – Job was blameless with regard to helping the poor and the orphan, and the widow. Verses 16-23 say – "If I have kept the poor from their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or eaten my morsel by myself, so that the fatherless could not eat of it (but from my youth I reared him as a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow); if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or any poor man without covering; if his heart has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, when I saw I had help in the gate; then let my arm fall from my shoulder, let my arm be torn from the socket." "For destruction from God is a terror to me, and because of His magnificence I cannot endure." I do not think that many Christians give enough thought to how much they look out for, and help the poor, and the helpless, and the needy in this world. But the more righteous a man is; the more that he will do so. It is a part of being blameless and Job thought upon God greatness; His magnificence, in terms of what He expected of him, and this motivated him to help them. When you have the means to do good to others and you do not do it; it is a sin to you. But Job was not this way; and I hope that each one of you will not be this way. Now, a man must provide for his own. But he should also pray to be able go beyond this; to be able make enough money, and to have some extra, to be able to "give to those in need". (Ephesians 4: 28) "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need." That is not only Christians in need; but also others in need as well, as the Lord would lead.

Sixthly – Job was blameless with regard to covetousness, greed, and idolatry. Verses 24-28 say – "If I have made gold my hope, or said to fine gold, 'You are my confidence'; If I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gained much; if I have observed the sun when it shines, or the moon moving

in brightness, so that my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand; this also would be an iniquity deserving of judgment, for I would have denied God who is above." All these things that Job mentions have to do with the desires of our inmost mind and heart in regard to what we trust in, and what we love the most in this material world. God looks at this. And we as men who would consider a man for the eldership should think about the man whom we are considering in terms of whether he places his greatest confidence in. Is it his money; his savings accounts, his possessions; or is God really his all in all? If it is so, that God is his highest trust and confidence; then he will not be enamored with worshiping the creation either; whether it is the sun in the beauty of its shining, or whether it is the moon being overwhelmingly beautiful on any given night. He will appreciate all that God has given in the creation, but he will look beyond it to worship the One who made it. He will thank and bless God for all things bright and beautiful in this world, and He will give Him the same praise and glory when there is 3 feet of snow on the ground and the wind is blowing at 50 miles an hour, as when all is serene and beautiful. He worships God in His sovereignty over nature.

Then 7thly – Job was blameless with regard to a revengeful spirit. In Verse 29, it says, "If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, or lifted myself up when evil found him." Job knew that it was wrong to take his own revenge or to rejoice in the downfall even of his enemies. This is a quality that is hard to come by if you have been personally offended. But a man who is blameless will seek out the right attitude towards his enemies. He will seek to have a right spirit and even love and pray for those who despitely use him. Have you come to this place of blamelessness? All these 7 things that I have mentioned to you are qualities which should be seen in a man who is blameless. There was one thing that Job was not blameless in, in all of his controversy with God and his friends. It is found in Job Chapter 35, if you will turn with me there. These words were spoken by Elihu who was not one of Job's closest friends. He was however, a younger man who deeply respected and appreciated Job's struggle to find out why he had suffered the loss of so much, when he was a righteous and holy man; a man of integrity. Elihu believed, after listening to Job for a long time, that he understood what it was that Job needed to hear so that he could be blameless in this whole trial that he was going through. Listen to what he says. "Moreover Elihu answered and said: 'Do you think this is right?' "Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's?' "For you say, 'What advantage will it be to You?' "What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?" "I will answer you, and your companions with you." "Look to the heavens and see; and behold the clouds—they are higher than you." "If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him?" "Or if you transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?" "If you are righteous, what do give to Him?" Here is where Job had failed. He was trying to justify himself more than God. In this he was not blameless and had to be reprovved by Elihu and God for it. But Job was a very humble man, even in this great affliction. And having been reprovved, he did

receive the correction, and he was restored. The blameless man realizes the truth of Proverbs Chapter 6, verse 23, that, " The commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life..." The blameless man is a man who not only willing to be reprovved where he needs it, but he is will also learn and grow as a result of it. These are the qualities of a man who is blameless; not perfection without sin, but perfection of intent, moving towards righteousness in heart and life; giving glory to God that the grace of God is instructing him and teaching him and bring him into conformity to Christ. Let us all strive to be blameless.